

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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O 100301Z PEB 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 035466

FOR AMBASSADOR PARKER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, LE, SY

SUBJECT: SITUATION IN LEBANON

REF: (A) BEIRUT 709, (B) BEIRUT 721

1. WE HAVE CONSIDERED YOUR SUGGESTION (REFTEL A) FOR
MESSAGE FOR SARKIS FROM THE SECRETARY. WE REMAIN OPEN-
MINDED BUT HESITATE TO DO SOMETHING THAT COULD ROUSE SYRIAN
TEMPERS IN A COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE WAY IF MESSAGE WERE
PUBLISHED. WE BELIEVE IT PREFERABLE NOW TO CONTINUE YOUR
PRESENT EFFORTS. AT YOUR DISCRETION, YOU COULD TELL SARKIS
YOU HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED BY DEPARTMENT TO MAKE FOLLOWING
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POINTS:

-- CLASHES OF LAST SEVERAL DAYS ARE VIEWED WITH SERIOUSNESS
IN WASHINGTON AND DEPARTMENT HOPES THAT PROBLEM CAN BE
QUICKLY RESOLVED BEFORE SECURITY ACHIEVEMENTS OF LAST 16
MONTHS ARE THREATENED.

-- SAY WE UNDERSTAND AND SYMPATHIZE WITH COMPLEXITY AND DELICACY OF PROBLEMS WITH WHICH SARKIS IS FACED AND BELIEVE ACTIVE LEADERSHIP IS CALLED FOR TO PROMOTE RESTRAINT ON ALL SIDES AND TO COOL INFLAMED TEMPER.

-- ADD THAT WE HAVE HAD DISCUSSIONS OF SITUATION IN DAMASCUS.

-- INFORM SARKIS THAT WHILE WE BELIEVE CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN HIM AND ASSAD IS THE KEY TO RESOLUTION OF PRESENT CRISIS, WE REMAIN PREPARED TO HELP IN ANY WAY POSSIBLE.

2. AS REGARDS YOUR ACTIVITIES WITH CHRISTIAN AND OTHER LEBANESE FACTIONAL LEADERS, YOU SHOULD CONTINUE TO URGE THEM TO SHOW RESTRAINT AND TO EXERCISE DISCIPLINE ON THEIR FOLLOWERS, WHETHER OR NOT BOUTROS APPROVES OF YOUR ACTIONS. WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT YOU WILL SEEK THEIR COOPERATION IN ENDING CLASHES IN WAYS CONSONANT WITH THEIR OWN SENSE OF PRIDE, POINTING OUT THAT A CONTINUATION OF THE STRIFE SERVES THE INTERESTS OF NEITHER THE LEBANESE NOR THE SYRIANS BUT DOES ALLOW OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPLOITATION BY ELEMENTS WHICH MAY DESIRE RETURN OF CHAOS IN LABANON.

3. FOR DAMASCUS: SINCE YOU HAVE BEEN INVITED TO COMPARE NOTES WITH THE SYRIANS ON PRESENT DEVELOPMENTS, HOPE YOU CONFIDENTIAL

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WILL BE ABLE TO DEVELOP MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SPECIFICS OF THE SYRIAN POSITION, IN PARTICULAR, ALLEGATIONS THAT SYRIANS ARE BENT ON A MILITARY INSTEAD OF A POLITICAL SOLUTION (SEE DEPARTMENT SEPTTEL). IF SYRIANS DO APPEAR TO BE TAKING THAT TACK, YOU SHOULD OF COURSE STRESS OUR HOPE THAT A PEACEFUL WAY OF CALMING TENSIONS WILL BE FOUND INSTEAD. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THE SYRIANS HAVE PROBABLY BEEN PROVOKED BUT BELIEVE THAT ANY FURTHER MILITARY ACTION WILL UNDO MUCH OF THE PROGRESS THE SYRIANS HAVE ACHIEVED IN RESTORING STABILITY IN LEBANON. VANCE

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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